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https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/2824969036603817486

2021 Section 319(h) NPS Implementation Program Request for Applications
Application Development Training

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Welcome to Part II of the RFA webinar series. In this webinar we'll be providing detailed guidance for putting together your application packet, primarily focusing on the Application Questions and Application Form.

Overview

• Section I: <u>Application Questions</u>

• Section II: <u>Application Form</u>

DEQ

There are two parts to this presentation. The first part will cover the Application Questions (Word doc). The second part will cover the Application Form (Excel doc) that will spend the majority of the time explaining the budget detail tab.

Disclaimer: I will be calling attention to specific questions and parts of the application form. My emphasis just means that those sections have critical information we need to evaluate your application. Coincidentally, many of those I'll be highlighting are also the parts we've seen neglected in the past. Answering these fully, along with complete answers for the others will give the reviewers the info they need and means we won't need to score your application lower. Please do not pay extra attention to those questions and parts AT THE EXPENSE of the other questions and parts.

Poll: Do you plan to submit an application for this RFA cycle?

- Yes
- Probably
- Probably not
- No

DEQ

Before we get into the nitty gritty of the application materials, let's do a quick poll. I know we have a few DEQ folks on the call who I'd ask to just skip this question, please.

Application Questions: Instructions

Read all questions in every section before responding to ensure you do not provide duplicate answers.

Each answer can be as short as a sentence but should not be longer than two paragraphs.

If a question does not apply to your project, please write "Not applicable."

Do not leave any questions blank. Do not delete any questions!

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DEQ

Review instructions

Read all the questions (see demo in the webinar recording)

Tip: grey out the questions that don't apply to your project. (DEMONSTRATE). Don't delete them. You'll need to have an answer, whether its yes, no, not applicable, to all of them. Deleting questions will mess up the numbering and thus mess up our scoring.

Tip 2: Take note of the places you think you'd be providing the same answer twice. Discuss them with your NPS coordinator to make sure you're understanding the question and providing what the question is asking for.

Application Questions: Project Overview

- Eight questions
- Sample of questions:
  - If **previous or other associated grants** exist in this IP area, how will this project build upon the work of those grants? (Please write "Not applicable" if there have not been any previous or other associated grants in the project's IP area within the last 10 years.)
  - What are the proposed **deliverables** of this project?
  - What are the proposed **outputs** of this project?
  - What are the **outcomes** of this project?

DEQ

Eight questions

Information provided in this section overlaps with some of that requested in the Application Form (most obvious: naming the IP and watershed info). We've eliminated the majority of these overlaps, but this one remains because it helps give the reviewer these two general pieces of information in one document instead of needing to flip to another.

Focus on questions 5-8: the bulk of the points awarded for this section come from these questions.

Note the definitions/references to help them answer questions – see bolded text. To open those, right click and select "Open hyperlink".

Application Questions: Project Need

9. What is the current status of the water quality impairment that will be addressed by the project?

13. Has your organization done previous 319(h)-funded implementation in this watershed? If yes:
   a. How has your organization's previous implementation met the goals of the IP and/or made progress toward meeting those goals?
   b. How will this project make progress toward and/or meet those IP goals?
   c. What is the justification or compelling reason why this project should receive continued funding?
   d. Is this project suggesting an expansion and/or change in the focus area of the project? If yes, why?

DEQ

Questions on which to focus: #9, #13 and #14
#9: can be anecdotal, but strongest if backed by WQ data

#13: If you've gotten 319(h) funding for work in this same watershed

Application Questions: Watershed, Geographic Description, and Location of Project

16. If the project will target implementation in specific counties, locations, or sub-watersheds of the IP, why have you prioritized implementation in these sub-watersheds or areas? (Please write "Not applicable" if the project will not target implementation.) If the answer is "Not Applicable":
    a. Why is targeting specific sub-watersheds within the IP area not necessary for this project?

18. What characteristics of the local communities in the project area may impact the success of and/or pose challenges to implementing the project?

8

DEQ

Questions on which to focus: #16 and #18
#16: Targeting is important. Helps show progress towards meeting IP goals. This answer either needs to tell us:
- why you've prioritized implementation in some areas over others
    OR
- why you haven't prioritized implementation – keeping in mind that we're looking for projects that will show progress towards IP goals. If you're spreading out implementation across 5-6 subwatersheds, it'll be harder to show progress towards goals than if that implementation was targeted on 1-2 subwatersheds, or a source sector, etc.

#18: you know your communities best. Show off what you know that gives you an edge and be candid about what could trip up the project

Application Questions: Watershed, Geographic Description, and Location of Project Continued

17. If your project proposes administering BMPs in more than one IP (please write "Not applicable" if your project will not administer BMPs in more than IP area):
   a. What is the benefit of working in more than one IP area in terms of meeting IP goals as opposed to a project in just one IP area?
   b. How will your project target within these IP areas to ensure BMP implementation has a higher likelihood of resulting in water quality improvements?

15. Will your project address the entire geographic extent of the IP(s) listed? If no:
   a. How is the project area different from the boundary of the IP area?

DEQ

#17 is important, but generally not applicable to most projects
#15 is just low-hanging fruit. Don't skip it.

Largest section, but technically only 7 of the 63 questions. Should be able to grey out a lot of this if you're only focused in one source sector.

Getting details on BMP implementation (#19-23)
Important to:

- Provide rationale for the type and quantity of BMPs – will often relate back to how you're prioritizing/targeting
- Outreach related to those specific BMPs – how you will promote cost share
- Demonstrate you understand the rules: cost share admin, contractor selection, design, install, O&M requirements, etc.
- Don't skip any of the sub-questions. All link back to some evaluative criteria.

Outreach outside of promoting BMP implementation (#24)
WQM (#25)

Application Questions: Budget Narrative

Focused on rationale behind the numbers in Tab 4

Where you'll cover allowances and match exemption circumstances

DEQ

Asking for the rationale behind the numbers in Tab 4 – most points for comprehensive, accurate, complete information AND that info demonstrates the amounts requested are reasonable and realistic

This is also the section where you'll cover allowances and match exemption circumstances. Those are:
Administering for multiple partners – go to definition
New Grantees – go to definition
Water Quality Monitoring – go to definition
Match exemption for fiscal stress – go to definition

If you're asking for any of those, you want to focus on the following questions:
- indirect costs (#35-36)
- additional TA allowance (#37-39),
and/or
- a match exemption (#43), will need to provide information to support those.

Poll: Do you think you'll be applying with a request for any of those special budget allowances?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

DEQ

Question 46: What roles will each partner fulfill for the project? This was recently changed between the version first issued and the one issued this week. There are prescribed roles (see definition) to use

Important that the more detailed responses be in the sub-questions in the Project Methods, Objectives, and Tasks section (#19b.ii.1, #19.c.i, #19.d.i, #20c.ii.1, #20d.i, #20e.ii, #20f.i, #21b.ii.1, #21c.i, #21d.i, #21e.i, #22b.ii.1, #22d.i, #22e.i, #22f.i, #23b.ii.1, #23c.i, #23d.i, #23e.i, #24b.i, #25b)

Questions #49 and #48 very important in this section – in terms of points awarded based on this criteria

Application Questions: Organizational Capacity

50. What is your organization's capacity and processes to lead and administer a successful implementation project?
    a. What systems does your organization have in place for tracking grant expenditures and personnel time?
    b. Does your organization have a time and labor process that meets federal and state (as applicable) requirements for compensation (see Section 200.430 Compensation—personal services of the Federal Uniform Grant Guidance)?
    c. Does your organization currently maintain guidance procedures for administrating grant projects and associated payments and personnel?

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DEQ

#50 – very important to be clear about how your organization tracks things. It says a lot about your organizational structure and is a good predictor of future success.

Application Questions: Organizational Capacity Continued

53. What is your organization's past experience implementing the BMPs proposed in this project?

55. What is your organization's role within the community?

56. How does your organization's role within the community enable it to complete the project successfully?

DEQ

#53, #55, and #56 answers combine for one of the major evaluative criterion

Application Questions: Cost Effectiveness

57. Why are the activities proposed by this project more cost effective than alternative actions?

60. How will your grant and match resources be used effectively and efficiently?

61. What are resources from other sources (i.e., non-federal match) that will ensure the project is cost efficient and successful?

DEQ

#57 – used to say something about pollution reductions, but we're not asking for that anymore. Basically want to know why you're justifying the number of BMPs for the total amount you're asking. So break it down: we'll get 10 stream exclusion projects for $225,000 of 319(h) funding. Comes out to $22,500 per BMP. I can compare that with another project that is proposing $30,000 per similar BMP. Obviously there are a lot of factors that play into costs, but this does give us an idea of how you've calculated the value of choosing some BMPs over others.

Application Questions: Timeline and Milestone Table

Explain rationale for why activities will take the time they will

Expands on earlier question re: rationale for proposed project length

62. What is the rationale for the sequence of project activities in relation to the requested grant period?

63. What are the rationales for the timeframes for tracking and reporting all BMP implementation activities?

DEQ

Example: If your milestone table says you'll have all the BMPs under contract in six months…is that realistic? Probably not. If that's your timeline, tell us why it IS realistic. We want to know your assumptions for the decisions. Don't try to impress us with a speedy, unrealistic timeline. You need to be able to defend your decisions.

Application Form: READ ME Tab

- Red text = for you to fill out
- Black text = don't touch
- Work through worksheet tabs in order; they build off of one another

DEQ

Providing step-by-step instructions for approaching the form to better understand it. The more you understand it, the easier it is/less daunting it is to fill out.

Tip 1: Resist urge to start filling it out immediately.

Tip 2: Pull up the form and start making notes in it using comments as we run through the presentation.

Application Form – Application Tab

- Basic info. If awarded we'll use this form for future reporting, so put the info in right the first time

- Don't touch the Project Budget Summary cells: B17 – N23. These auto-populate based on what you input in Tab 4.

DEQ

Basic information requested such as contact information, organizational ID #s, IP name, watersheds, etc.

I've updated this workbook to include SAMPLE versions of most of the tabs for reference. These are not perfect and completing your application the same way doesn't guarantee you'll be selected for funding. It's just a resource.

You can access those by right clicking on any tab, selecting "Unhide" and then selecting the SAMPLE tab you want to add to the workbook.

Demonstrate Tab 1 – Application SAMPLE tab.

Do not touch the Project Budget Summary cells: B17 – N23. These auto-populate based on what you'll put in Tab 4.

Again, just review these tabs when you're first seeing the workbook. Resist the urge to begin filling out. Make notes – especially where you have questions.

Application Form: Project Partners and Technical Leads Tab

- Fill in as much as you can
- Ok to leave $ amount of match funding blank if you need to come back

DEQ

Fill in as much as you can.

Ok to leave $ amount of match funding blank if you need to come back.

Do at least put in the names of your partners because you'll need their names in subsequent tabs.

Open Tab 2 – Partners SAMPLE and demo

Application Form: Proposed BMP Activity Tab

• Very important to do this BEFORE opening the budget tab

DEQ

DO THIS BEFORE YOU DO YOUR BUDGET. This populates Tab 4 and makes much easier to fill out the budget tab.

Refer back to the IP for BMP units as these should directly correspond.

Open Tab 3 – BMP Activity and demo.

Whether you're applying for TA allowances or Match Exemptions, I think you can start filling out Tab 4 the same way.

Step 1: Fill out section 6 of the Project Budget Detail (Tab 4); you're not required to fill out match funding yet if you don't want.

Step 2: Total the amount of BMP funding you'll request from DEQ (see cell I113 in Tab 4).

Step 3: Use the amount of BMP funding requested to determine the maximum amount of TA you could request (also see cells V24 – AB27 for possible TA:BMP ratios based on the total of BMP funding anticipated)

Step 4: Complete the remaining sections of Tab 4 Project Budget with the TA amounts requested from DEQ for each category.

Application Form: Project Budget Detail and Project Budget Worksheet Tab (Continued)

• Demonstration

DEQ

This is where things shift. If you're not going to request additional TA or match exemptions AND not use Tab 4a, then proceed enter the Match amounts and proceed to Tab 5 – Milestones. If you are going to request exemptions AND want to use Tab 4a, then follow these steps.

To determine if you need to use this sheet (Tab 4a), refer back to questions #37, #38, #39, and #43 in the Application Questions. If you say yes to any of those questions, you may want to use this sheet to help determine how these special circumstances can impact your budget.

If the answer to all four of those questions is NO, then I recommend hiding Tab 4a and proceeding with Tab 5.

A quick disclaimer before getting into what Tab 4a offers: it's a new tool that has been tested, but not broadly. I'm probably 75% confident in it. It's meant to be helpful, but if it's not, contact your NPS region coordinator and we'll work out how to help you.

Application Form: Project Budget Detail and Project Budget Worksheet Tab (Continued)

• Demonstration

DEQ

Step 1: Open Tab 6-WQM and select true or false in cell E12. This auto-populates cell H14 in Tab 4a. The two cells must align.

Step 2: Open Tab 4a-Project Budget Worksheet and answer questions in cells A9-J14 to see what additional TA funding could be added based on exceptions. Look at cell C55 to see the maximum amount of TA funding that could be added to your project's TA categories for all the special conditions that apply to your project.

Step 3: Fill out the anticipated amount from each type of budget special circumstance section that you plan to add to your budget (see cells D44, D48, and D53) to determine the implications that adding those amounts will have on your TA:BMP ratio.

Application Form: Milestone Table and Timeline Tab

- Align activities with your grant period
- Be realistic
- Progress reviews are every six months
- One Partners Meeting every year (spring/summer)
- Closeout review is within last three months of grant period

DEQ

Application Form: Water Quality Monitoring Plan Tab

- No sample for this one
- Work closely with regional NPS Coordinator

DEQ

Application Form: Application Checklist and Certification Tab

- Self explanatory
- Only fill out red text.

DEQ

Poll: Round two: do you plan to submit an application for this RFA cycle?

- Yes
- Probably
- Probably not
- No

DEQ